

The Significance and Practical Paths of Integrating Mental Health Education and Ideological and Political Education for College Students

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ABSTRACT

In the new era talent cultivation system, the organic integration of mental health education and ideological and political education for college students is an inevitable requirement for implementing the fundamental task of moral education and talent cultivation. This article conducts research from theoretical foundations, value implications and practical approaches, and proposes that their integration has the logical convergence points of goal alignment, content intersection and method complementarity. The value of their integration is reflected in the multi-dimensional empowerment that promotes the all-round development of students, improves the functions of education systems, and responds to the practical challenges of the times. Ultimately, it constructs a five-in-one collaborative education system featuring content integration, method innovation, team co-construction, mechanism improvement, and environment creation, with the aim of providing practical references for universities to achieve the organic unity of knowledge imparting and personality shaping.

KEYWORDS

College students; Mental health education; Ideological and political education; Collaborative education

1 Introduction

During the period of social transformation, contradictions are becoming prominent. Contemporary college students are confronted with multiple pressures such as academic competition, career choices, and interpersonal communication, with mental health issues and ideological value confusions becoming increasingly intertwined. In traditional higher education, mental health education and ideological and political education are often disconnected. The former focuses on psychological counseling and adjustment, while the latter centers on value guidance and shaping, which is difficult to meet the complex and multifaceted growth needs of young students in the new era. Against this backdrop, promoting the in-depth integration of the two, breaking down disciplinary barriers and educational boundaries, and building a new pattern of collaborative education are not only strategic measures to implement the overall goal of cultivating new era talents capable of shouldering the great responsibility of national rejuvenation, but also practical needs to enhance the quality of higher education and promote the all-round development of college students. Based on the theoretical foundations and value implications of the integration of the two, this article explores a systematic practical path, aiming to provide theoretical support and operational guidance for the innovative development of education in colleges and universities.

2 Logical Alignment: The Theoretical Foundations for the Integration of Mental Health Education and Ideological and Political Education

The organic integration of mental health education and ideological and political education is not merely a simple superposition of functions, but a deep alignment based on internal logic, which is reflected in goal alignment, content intersection, and method complementarity. It can provide theoretical foundations for collaborative education. The goal alignment is the fundamental prerequisite for the integration of the two. Both of them take moral education and talent cultivation as the fundamental tasks, serve to cultivate new era talents, and are highly consistent in the direction of talent development. Mental health is the foundation of moral development. A sound psychological quality helps students receive ideological and moral education and internalize external value requirements into behavioral norms. Good ideological and moral qualities are the guarantee of mental health, while correct Three Outlooks can provide students with spiritual support and help them maintain a positive attitude when facing confusion and pressure. The two complement each other. The content intersection is the core carrier of the integration of the two. The core content of ideological and political education, such as the shaping of Three Outlooks, is highly related to key issues in mental health education, such as self-awareness. Mental health education provides a psychological foundation and acceptance mechanism for the internalization of values, eliminates psychological disorders, and enhances the effectiveness of ideological and political education. Ideological and political education provides value orientation and spiritual support for psychological counseling to prevent psychological intervention from falling into the technical pitfall^[1]. The method

complementarity injects practical vitality into the integration of the two. Ideological and political education should draw on principles of mental health education such as empathy, to move away from the didactic approach, and align with the psychological needs of students. Professional methods of mental health education such as individual counseling can provide personalized and experiential practical carriers for ideological and political education, and transform abstract value concepts into students' inner qualities, thus enhancing the effectiveness of ideological and political education.

3 Value Implications: The Multi-dimensional Significance of Their Collaborative Education

The theoretical consistency offers the possibility of collaborative education, and its multi-dimensional empowerment in terms of student growth, educational optimization, and response to the times profoundly reveals the necessity and urgency of this work. The following will systematically analyze the value implications of the integration of the two from micro to macro levels.

3.1 For Individual Students: Promote the All-round Development of Inner Harmony and Outer Unity

For individual students, the integration of the two can achieve a mutual empowerment of psychological capital cultivation and value guidance, and promote the all-round development of internal harmony and external unity. In terms of empowering value recognition with psychological capital, enhancing students' positive psychological capital such as psychological resilience, hope and optimism through mental health education can strengthen their ability to understand, identify with and practice mainstream values. Students with strong psychological capital typically have an open mindset and stable emotions. They can view social phenomena and values rationally and maintain firm convictions under the impact of diverse values. In terms of value guidance nurturing a healthy mindset, the lofty ideals and moral norms conveyed by ideological and political education can provide spiritual nourishment for students' psychological growth. Ideal and belief education helps students establish clear life goals and value pursuits, enables them to find a sense of meaning and belonging in academic setbacks, career confusion, and other challenges, thus effectively preventing common psychological problems such as hollow heart syndrome. At the same time, internalizing moral norms as psychological regulatory principles helps students establish healthy psychological boundaries in interpersonal communication and interest choices, reduce psychological conflicts and anxiety, and achieve the organic unity between internal psychological harmony and external behavioral norms ^[2].

3.2 For the Education System: Achieve the Organic Unity of Knowledge Imparting and Personality Shaping

At the level of the education system, their collaborative education can resolve the disconnection between knowledge imparting and personality shaping in traditional education, and build a comprehensive psychological education system under the framework of great ideological and political education, thus enhancing educational effectiveness. In traditional higher education, mental health education and ideological and political education belong to different modules, with scattered resources and single functions. However, their organic combination can integrate resources, form an all-round education network, and achieve a synergy effect where $1+1>2$. Specifically, the integration of mental health education makes ideological and political education more warm-hearted and effective, and helps to enhance the precision and appeal of value guidance through empathetic communication and other means. The integration of ideological and political education into mental health education endows its teaching content with greater ideological depth and orientation, avoiding superficiality and achieving an organic unity of knowledge imparting, ability cultivation, personality shaping and value guidance ^[3].

3.3 Meeting the Demands of the Times: Addressing the Realistic Challenges of the Once-in-a-century Transformation and the Characteristics of the Youth

From a macro perspective of the development of the times, the integration of the two is an inevitable choice to respond to the once-in-a-century transformation and the characteristics of contemporary youth, and it has distinct practical relevance. In the current context of a complex and rapidly changing global landscape, the rapid evolution of technological revolution, and the increasingly fierce social competition, young students are confronted with unprecedented development opportunities, while bearing multifaceted pressures from studies, employment, and daily life. Therefore, they are prone to psychological imbalance and value confusion, and urgently need comprehensive support from the education system. Meanwhile, contemporary college students are intellectually active, distinctly individualistic, and eager to be understood. They have a strong resistance to the traditional didactic education model and are more inclined to accept things through equal dialogue, and experiential learning. The collaborative education of the two can meet students' emotional needs through empathetic listening, respond to their life dilemmas through value guidance, and provide precise growth support through personalized services. It not only helps students enhance their psychological resilience in responding to social changes, but also guides them to establish firm ideals and beliefs as well as correct value orientations, making educational work more contemporary, targeted and effective.

4 Practical Approach: Building a Five-in-one Collaborative Education System

After fully demonstrating the theoretical foundation and multi-dimensional significance of the integration of the two, it is necessary to explore effective practical paths. This article starts from five key elements of content, methods, teams, mechanisms, and environment to focus on building a “five-in-one” collaborative education system.

4.1 Content Integration: Build a Course Resource Library Integrating Values and Psychology

Course content serves as the core carrier for collaborative education. To achieve a deep integration of psychological education and moral education, it is necessary to break the original disciplinary boundaries of courses and promote organic integration at the content level. Colleges and universities can strive to develop a number of integrated courses. For instance, they can incorporate discussions on the outlook on life and values into the “Mental Health for College Students” course, and add modules such as psychological adjustment and stress management to ideological and political courses like “Ideological Morality and Rule of Laws”, so as to achieve the simultaneous advancement of value guidance and psychological growth. At the same time, they can develop interdisciplinary thematic teaching units around practical issues in students’ growth, such as career development, interpersonal communication, and coping with setbacks, integrating ideological enlightenment with psychological empowerment. In terms of teaching resources, it can organize the compilation of integrated teaching casebooks, selecting true and vivid stories, such as the psychological resilience and value pursuit demonstrated by young role models in difficult situations, in order to make students achieve dual growth in ideology and psychology through resonance ^[4].

4.2 Method Innovation: Explore a Diversified Teaching Model with Explicit-Implicit Complementarity

Teaching method innovation is the key to enhancing the effectiveness of collaborative education. Colleges and universities should change the traditional one-way indoctrination model and adopt more participatory and experiential teaching methods. For example, they can carry out theme-based situational drama activities, allowing students to experience the psychological process when making moral choices through role-playing. They can organize practical activities such as volunteer services and social research to guide students to temper their character and adjust their mindset through contact with reality. The design of campus cultural activities should also focus on the integration of psychology and ideological and political education. For instance, thematic psychological group counseling can be carried out in conjunction with significant commemorative days to organically combine the cultivation of a sense of patriotism and the development of a positive mindset. In addition, modern educational technology can be rationally utilized to build an integrated information platform to push high-quality teaching resources, and provide students with more convenient and personalized learning support.

4.3 Team Co-construction: Building an Interdisciplinary-Professional Education Community

The teaching staff is the core of collaborative education. Colleges and universities should strive to build an education team with an interdisciplinary perspective, and promote exchanges and collaboration among teachers in different positions such as ideological and political education teachers, mental health teachers, and instructors. Mutual understanding can be enhanced and the comprehensive educational capability can be improved through regular joint teaching and research, case studies, and specialized training activities. In terms of mechanism, the responsibilities of various teachers in collaborative education should be clearly defined, and corresponding cooperation processes and communication channels should be established to change the previous situation where each teacher was in charge of a specific area. At the same time, the assessment and incentive mechanism should be improved to give appropriate recognition to teachers who have achieved outstanding results in integrated education, and stimulate their enthusiasm and creativity ^[5].

4.4 Mechanism Improvement: Establish a Closed-loop Management Mechanism of Monitoring-Evaluation-Feedback

The mechanism improvement is an important guarantee for the continuous advancement of collaborative education. Colleges and universities should establish a closed-loop management mechanism of monitoring-evaluation-feedback to ensure the standardized and long-term development of the work. Firstly, colleges and universities should improve the collaborative education mechanism, establishing a school-level leading group for integrating mental health education and ideological and political education, spearheaded by the division leader to coordinate resources from multiple departments, clarify responsibilities and workflows, and form a three-level management system. Secondly, they can establish an early warning and intervention mechanism, setting up a dual early warning system for psychological crises and ideological fluctuations to collect information through multiple channels to build student growth files, and achieve precise positioning of at-risk students. Meanwhile, they can initiate a closed-loop assistance mechanism of psychological intervention and ideological and political guidance to form a full-process assistance system. Thirdly, they can optimize the assessment and evaluation mechanism, building a comprehensive evaluation system that combines formative and

summative assessments, covering multiple dimensions through diverse evaluation methods. Finally, they should strengthen the resource guarantee mechanism, setting up special funds for multiple tasks, integrating internal and external resources, optimizing the allocation of on-campus facilities, and establishing long-term cooperation with external resources to provide students with professional practice platforms and service support.

4.5 Environmental Creation: Build a Three-dimensional Educational Field with School-Family-Society Synergy

The creation of an educational environment provides an important support for the collaborative education system. Colleges and universities should actively build an educational field with the school-family-society synergy, and form a collaborative educational force that involves all staff, the entire process and all aspects. First of all, in terms of campus environment construction, emphasis should be placed on creating a cultural atmosphere that combines humanistic care and value guidance. For instance, ideological and political education and mental health education can be integrated into the campus landscape by creating thematic cultural corridors and setting up distinctive publicity boards. In addition, student associations are an important force in the campus education system. Mental health associations and ideological and political associations can be supported to jointly hold theme activities, such as psychological drama performances and value reflection salons, to help students achieve dual improvement in ideological growth and psychological quality through participation. Secondly, in terms of family collaboration, colleges and universities should establish a regular communication mechanism between home and school, to convey scientific educational concepts and methods to parents through various forms such as parenting classes, online workshops, and family education guidance manuals. They also can guide parents to pay less attention solely to children's academic performance, and to attach great importance to the shaping of children's values and the care of their psychological state, promoting family education and school education to move in the same direction. Finally, in terms of integrating social resources, colleges and universities should proactively connect with multiple stakeholders such as the government, social organizations and enterprises. For instance, they can collaborate with government departments to carry out educational projects to strive for policy and resource support. They also can join hands with social organizations to expand educational platforms such as volunteer services and social practices. These approaches will help students make a smooth transition from campus to the workplace and enhance their social adaptability.

5 Conclusion

The deep integration of mental health education and ideological and political education for college students is an important path to implement the fundamental task of moral education and talent cultivation and train new-era talents. This article systematically demonstrates the necessity and feasibility of their collaborative education from three aspects: theoretical alignment, value implications, and practical approaches. In the future, colleges and universities need to further break down disciplinary barriers, strengthen resource integration, and build a scientific and efficient collaborative education system through content integration, method innovation, team co-construction, mechanism improvement and environment creation. This will truly achieve the organic unity of knowledge imparting, ability cultivation and value guidance, and provide a solid support for cultivating socialist builders and successors with both moral and psychological cultivation and all-round development.

About the Author

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